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RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WILLITON

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1961.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Rodent Operative - G.H.Pearce.

WILLITON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1961.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

Mr.Chairman,Ladies & Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my report upon the health and sanitation of your district for the year 1961.

Very few cases of infectious disease have been notified apart from a measles epidemic which continued during the spring and early summer,reaching a peak during June and July. In all,320 cases were notified.

There were no cases of Poliomyelitis or Food Poisoning and the number of cases of Tuberculosis continue to show a steady decline, four only being notified during the year,and the general health of the population as a whole continues to be good.

The Housing Act,1961,consolidating and amending previous Acts and Financial Provisions,came into force during the year.

Mr.A.P.L.Wallis left at the end of the year to become Assistant County Health Inspector to the Somerset County Council,his place being taken by Mr.T.C.Pope from Swindon.

The following sections detail the work of the Department during the year,together with vital statistics and general public health services.

Section A. Vital Statistics and Social Conditions
Section B. Water Supplies,Sewage and Refuse Disposal
Section C. Housing
Section D. Food Inspection and Supplies
Section E. Public Health Nuisances,Complaints,etc.
Section F. Caravans and Camping
Section G. Other Acts administered by the Department
Section H. Summary of Inspections and Visits by Health Department Officers.

Section A.
Vital Statistics & Social Conditions.

The district in general retains its agricultural character and attracts in increasing numbers yearly,holiday makers and tourists. Development has been of the purely residential order and this pattern looks like being maintained apart from the Hinkley Point Nuclear Power Station.

Area	97,364 acres
Population (estimated mid-year home population	14,110
Number of Dwelling Houses	4,575
Rateable Value	£144,674
Product of a Penny Rate (estimated)	£575

Live Births.	M.	F.	Total
Legitimate	99	79	178
Illegitimate	6	4	10
	105	83	188

Birth Rate per thousand population (live births).... 12·6

Still Births.			
Legitimate	2	2	4
Illegitimate	1	-	1
	3	2	5

Deaths.			
From all causes	99	89	188

Death Rate per thousand population..... 12·6

Health Services.
The District is served by Hospitals at Minehead and Musgrove Park, Taunton, and Hospitals for the Aged Sick at Williton, Bridgwater and Taunton. Ambulance services are available from Minehead and Musgrove Park.

Notifiable Diseases.	Cases Notified.
Smallpox	Nil
Scarlet Fever	1
Diphtheria	Nil
Enteric Fever	"
Measles	320
Whooping Cough	5
Puerperal Pyrexia	Nil
Opthalmia Neonatorum	"
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	"
Dysentery	1
Malaria	Nil
Acute Poliomyelitis	"
Encephalitis Lethargica	"
Erysipelas	1
Q.Fever	1
Food Poisoning	Nil
Tuberculosis (Respiratory)	3
(Non-respiratory)	1

Section B.
Water Supplies.
The general standard of quality throughout the district has been reasonably good, having in mind the considerable amount of unchlorinated water still being used. There has been no serious shortage. During the year the following Parishes went over to the Clatworthy supply - Crowcombe (part), Crowcombe Heathfield, Bicknoller, West Quantoxhead.
Results of samples from piped supplies :-

Raw Water.				
Bacteriological	- Satisfactory	- 129	Unsatisfactory	- 34
Chemical	- "	11	"	Nil
Treated Water.				
Bacteriological	- "	104	"	12
Chemical	- "	10	"	3

Refuse Disposal.
Of 30 Parishes, 29 receive regular collections of refuse. The three larger villages getting weekly collections, whilst the remainder, with the exception of Oare, have fortnightly collections.
In the case of Oare, which is somewhat remote and inaccessible, periodic special collections are made.
Disposal is on four semi-controlled tips, all of which are rapidly becoming full and new disposal sites are being sought.
Sewage Disposal.
Ten Parishes have main drainage and efficient disposal systems. Schemes for sewering of the Western Parishes are now complete and work is about to commence. The Parishes of Bicknoller and West Quantoxhead on the Eastern side of the district are next in the list of priorities.
Section C.
Housing.
Houses erected and gained from conversions during the year totalled 85, and there are now 4,568 dwellings with the district of which the Local Authority own 782.
Housing Grant applications approved during the year numbered 63 at an average approval price of £800.
The Rent Act, 1957.
No Certificates of Disrepair have been issued under the above Act.

Section D.
Food Inspection & Supplies.
Carcases & Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part.

	Cattle (excluding Cows)	Cows	Calves	Sheep & Lambs	Pigs
Number killed (approximate)	1,100	45	275	7,250	4,000
Number inspected	935	37	261	6,293	3,235
All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci.					
Whole carcases condemned	Nil	2	4	10	5
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	76	11	3	104	271
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis and cysticerci	8·2	35·1	2·6	1·8	8·8
Tuberculosis only					
Whole carcases condemned	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	54
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1·6
Cysticercosis					
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigeration.	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Generalised and totally condemned	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Weight of meat condemned (in lbs) for :-					
(a) Tuberculosis	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1,094
(b) Cysticercosis	100	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
(c) Other	1,200	524	183	583	1,201
Total (in lbs) condemned	1,300	524	183	583	2,295

Slaughterhouses.
Although the slaughterhouses of the district should have been in compliance with both the Construction Regulations and Cruelty Prevention Regulations by the end of the year, work was still in hand. It is unfortunate that local butchers could not have opened a central slaughterhouse instead of retaining small ones over a scattered area of West Somerset.

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Food Premises,Etc.
Food hygiene standards continue to be maintained at a reasonably high level. Informal action has been taken in 16 cases most of which were related to poor decorative condition of premises,or defects of some fixtures and equipment.

Section E.

Public Health Nuisances,Complaints,Etc.
Of 97 complaints received and investigated,most referred to nuisance from defective drainage,foul ditches,etc,and informal action was necessary in 25 cases.
One of the more serious complaints,about which action was taken on two occasions,referred to the disposal of the contents of cesspool emptiers by a private concern operating in the district.
The problem of gipsy encampments,with no sanitation and other attendant troubles was also met with on several occasions.

Rodent Control.
The Council's Rodent Operative continues to be fully occupied with pest destruction and during the year has actually recovered 1,541 dead rats; he has also successfully dealt with 261 wasp's nests and 8 hornet's nests.
In addition,during the summer months he also carries out the clearance of litter baskets in conjunction with his normal duties.
Treatments and inspections carried out are as follows :-

Property	Inspected.	Treated.
Domestic	960	365
Agricultural	256	23
Business	81	20
Local Authority	17	7

These figures include properties in the area of the Watchet U.D.C. with whom this Council has a joint arrangement.

Section F.

Caravans & Camping.
During the year site owners consulted the department upon improvements to caravan sites and these are in hand at Blue Anchor,for Luttrell Fstate,Ltd,at West Luccombe for Mr.Dascombe,and at Home Farm,St.Audries for Mr.C.Stafford. Work has also commenced upon the new site for Mr.R.Bosley at Warren Bay. Seasonal sites at Bossington are to close down.
Once again holiday caravanning and camping showed a considerable increase over the previous year,and the attendant problems of litter and lack of proper sanitation is an annually recurring trouble.

Section G.

Factories Act,1937.
There are 55 factories in the district including six licenced slaughterhouses. The majority of the others are of the light engineering type whilst several are of a temporary nature,i.e. building sites,etc.
Two contraventions of the Act,both relating to unsatisfactory sanitary accommodation,were dealt with.
There are 24 outworkers residing in the district of which 4 are employed by businesses outside the district.

Pet Animals Act.

Rag Flock Act.
There are no pet shops within the district or premises dealing in rag flock.

Section H.

Housing Acts,1936-1954.

Rent Act,1957.

Housing (Financial Provisions) Act,1958.

Housing Inspections	482
Informal Notices served	13
Statutory " "	9

Public Health Acts.

Inspections of Drainage & Sewerage	289
" " Water Supplies	60
" " Refuse Disposal	75
" " Camping & Caravan Sites	162
" " Nuisances	75
" " Filthy or Verminous Premises	14
" " Public Conveniences	7
" " Sanitary Fittings	4
Miscellaneous Inspections	42
Infectious Diseases Enquiries	2
Informal Notices Served	23

Food & Drugs Acts.

Inspections of Slaughterhouses	47
" " Food & Catering Premises	76
" " Knackers Yards	5
Informal Notices Served	16

Factories Acts.

Inspections	5
Informal Notices Served	2

Complaints Received	101
" Investigated	101

There still remain outstanding a few improvements to caravan sites to comply with the Caravan Sites & Control of Development Act,1960,and some improvements to slaughterhouses and provision of stunning pens and this will be concentrated upon in the coming year.

I would like once again to record my thanks to the staff of the Public Health Department for their continued good work.

I am,Mr.Chairman,Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

M.B.,Ch.B.

Medical Officer of Health.